

Hampton Roads Regional Transit Vision Plan

What is the Hampton Roads Regional Transit Vision Plan and why is it important?

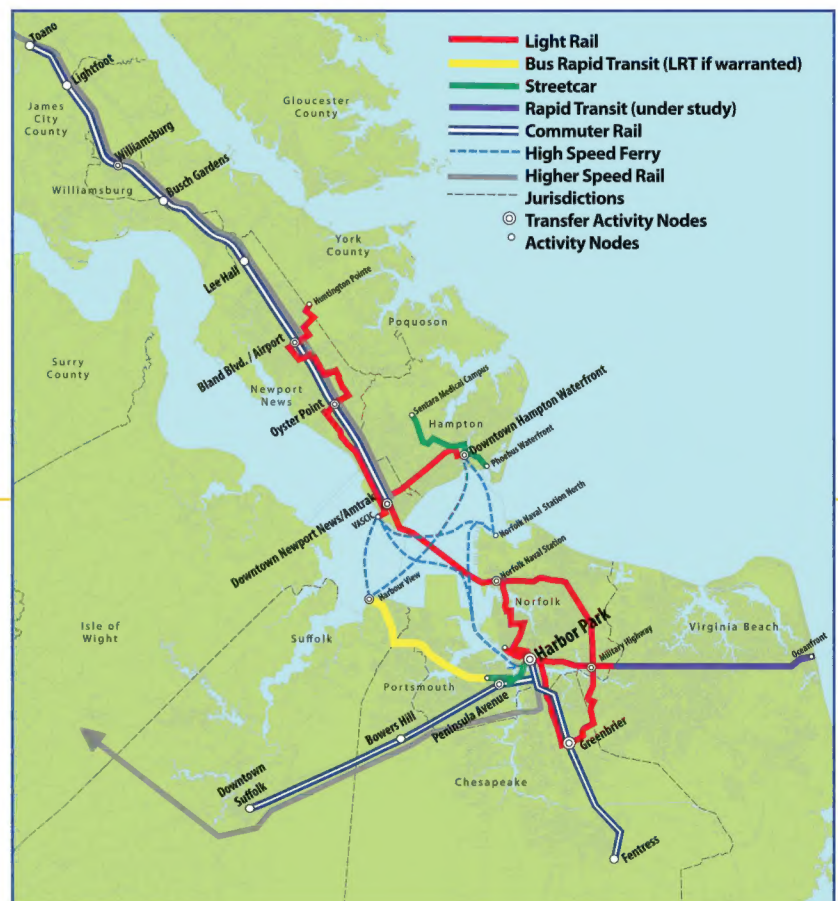
The plan is a look into the future – 2025 and beyond – to imagine what may be possible for the region's transit services. It provides a concept for a regional rapid transit network that connects major employment and population centers in Hampton Roads. It envisions thoughtful and coordinated land use planning combined with appropriate transit modes to improve mobility for the public.

The Hampton Roads population and economy will continue to grow. This growth will generate increased demand on one of the region's most important assets – its transportation infrastructure. Regional leaders recognize that a long-term solution cannot be achieved through roadway improvements alone. A rapid transit system could improve both quality of life and regional economic performance.

The Hampton Roads Regional Transit Vision Plan provides a long-term framework for transit development, not a definite set of approved projects. As the region and local governments select projects for further study, planners, elected officials, and the public will collaborate to define the specific requirements, alignments, and transit modes in accordance with local land use planning and available funding.

Recommendations in the Vision Plan

The vision plan considers a variety of transit modes, recognizing that a sustainable and successful transit network provides a mix of transit options appropriate for the diverse land use conditions throughout the region. The envisioned transit network creates multi-modal connections, allowing riders to transfer between rail, bus and ferry systems. The plan establishes phases for the development of transit services in Hampton Roads for 2025, 2035 and beyond.



Vision Plan Mode Recommendations

Light Rail Transit: An electric railway fueled by overhead wires, similar to the Tide. It can operate on separate right-of-way corridors and along some urban streets.



Commuter Rail: Heavy rail equipment largely operating on existing rail lines and consisting of diesel locomotives pulling multiple rail coaches. Trips are from 20-60 miles in length much like the Virginia Railway Express in Northern Virginia.



Enhanced Bus: Higher-frequency service with improved operations such as priority at traffic signals, real-time arrival information, and additional station stop amenities.



Express Bus: Similar to today's HRT MAX service that uses coach bus vehicles and serves regional commuter trips.

Bus Rapid Transit: Special bus service operating in dedicated lanes with station and vehicle improvements to speed boarding. Serves intermediate distance trips with limited stops.



Streetcar: Similar to light rail service, streetcars typically operate in existing street and travel shorter distances, with more frequent stops. The vehicles enable faster boarding and more comfortable and accessible travel than buses.

High-Speed Ferry: These passenger ferries would be geared towards commuters, with routes connecting key employment centers on either side of the James River.



Why is land use planning an important element?

In short: it makes sense.

In order for rapid transit to be an efficient alternative to automobile travel – especially for the vast majority of commuters who commute to work alone – transit stations must be conveniently accessible on foot, both at origin and destination points. With proper planning, business and residential development will gravitate to compact transit hubs. This is commonly known as transit-oriented development (TOD).



Artist's depiction of potential downtown Newport News TOD

The Plan seeks to establish a regional transit network that builds on land use planning that is supportive of TOD and connects major employment and population centers in Hampton Roads. TOD supports efficient transit service through the creation of compact, walkable, mixed-used communities within ¼ to ½ miles of a transit station. TOD brings together people, jobs, and services and is designed in a way that makes travel by foot, bicycle or transit efficient, safe and convenient.

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